

# IN THE WORKS

*TUNE IN HERE FOR NEWS ABOUT PERSONNEL SYSTEM REFORM IN WASHINGTON*

*April 2004*

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*A Great Workforce, Getting Better*

## **GEARING UP TO PROVIDE TRAINING**

Successfully implementing change requires providing the right training, to the right people, at the right time.

The Department of Personnel (DOP) is working closely with the Department of General Administration and the Office of Financial Management to develop training to cover every aspect of Washington Works. Topics range from using the new performance management tools to new ways to recruit based on the needs of a specific position.

Over the coming months, DOP will be working with agencies to determine their training needs for employees, human resource professionals, managers and supervisors. This information will help DOP decide what training to offer, when it would be most effective, and how and where it should be delivered.

Watch for new learning opportunities presented in a variety of ways including traditional workshops, eLearning courses, consultations, presentations, and classes that agencies contract for individually.

Several courses related to Washington Works are available now. To view the complete list of courses, course descriptions and a current schedule, go to [http://hr.dop.wa.gov/training/washington\\_works.htm](http://hr.dop.wa.gov/training/washington_works.htm)



## **BARGAINING UPDATE**

The Labor Relations office opened negotiations with the 24-person team representing The Evergreen State College and some community colleges on April 8.

By April 9, the two sides had reached agreement on ground rules. Talks progressed to contract language on April 19.

"This is a good beginning," said Gary Moore, the Governor's chief negotiator. "I am optimistic as we head into contract negotiations with the higher ed team."

Negotiations with the Washington Federation of State Employees team representing general government employees currently are proceeding without ground rules.

Bargaining is scheduled to begin soon both with the Local 17 of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, and also with the Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 117.

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## **NEW PERSONNEL RULES FOCUS ON HIRING BEST PERSON FOR THE JOB**

Draft rules for recruitment and selection, and appointments are now available for comment on the [Department of Personnel's website](#). Employees are invited to provide [feedback](#) online, through email, or through their human resource office. The comment period runs through May 17. Topics covered by these rules may be subject to collective bargaining.

### **Recruitment and selection rules**

The new rules and hiring process are designed to help state employers recruit and select the best person for each job. That means more flexibility and an emphasis on the skills needed to be successful in a specific position.

Employers will have more flexibility in how they recruit and screen candidates. They can do all of their own recruiting and testing or can use the Department of Personnel's automated online application and screening tools. Or employers can choose some combination of both.

The online application process, which has already proven to be a huge success with both job candidates and hiring managers, will be significantly enhanced with implementation of the new Human Resource Management System. It will contain more sophisticated screening tools to help narrow the field of applicants to a candidate pool with the skills that most closely match the skills needed for a particular position.

Instead of testing literally thousands of unscreened applicants for placement on a hiring list, employers will be able to administer customized tests to a much smaller pool of qualified candidates. This will save considerable time and cost for both employers and applicants.

The rules also aim to remove artificial barriers that keep qualified employees from being considered for job openings. For example, instead of minimum qualifications written for an entire job classification, candidates will be screened for desirable skills and talents based on the unique needs of the actual job. Minimum qualifications based on legal requirements, such as a license or certificate, will remain in effect.

### **Appointment rules**

Once a person is hired into a position, the appointment rules take effect. The appointment rules cover topics such as probationary or trial service periods, reversion rights, non-permanent appointments, and project employees.

Under the new rules, employers will be able to choose from broader candidate pools, even if there are reduction-in-force (RIF) candidates. Employers also may require a transition review period for employees hired off of the RIF list. This essentially provides an "escape hatch" for both the employee and the employer if the job turns out not to be a good fit. If things don't work out during the review period, the employee goes back on the RIF list.

Employers also will have the option to extend either a probationary or trial service period on an individual basis up to a total of no more than 12 months. This option provides an employee with more time to learn a complex job and to prove him or herself capable of doing the required work.



## CLASSIFICATION CHANGES TO BE SPREAD OVER FIVE YEARS

Work on consolidating job classes is moving forward under a revised timeline and draft implementation plan. Under the initial plan, all of the state's current 2,400 job classifications were to be consolidated into broad occupational categories effective July 1, 2005.

This timeline has been revised to give agencies and employees more time for a smoother transition. The new plan calls for implementation to be accomplished in multiple phases.

### First Phase

The initial round of consolidations will take place during the first half of 2005. This first phase will focus on job classes that can be consolidated easily and with little or no cost impact.

One group includes job classes that will transfer to occupational categories as a single series, and will not be combined with other job classes (such as the current job classes of Avalanche Control Trainee, Avalanche Control Technician, and Avalanche Control Supervisor).

The next step will be to look at partial consolidation of classes that have similar functions but currently have different classifications.

This will include classes in the clerical, fiscal and information

## AGENCY TEAMS TO PREVIEW NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM

In late April, more than 300 representatives of state agencies will get a first-hand look at what will be included in the first version (Release 1) of the state's new automated payroll and personnel computer system being released January 2005.

This first release of the Human Resource Management System (HRMS) will include all of the functions needed to pay state employees and maintain personnel records, plus the capacity to implement the new rules and pay practices that will result from civil service reform and collective bargaining.

The new system will be implemented in two phases. The first group of agencies (Phase 1) will start using the new system in January and the second group (Phase 2) will switch over in April 2005.

**The HRMS project leads will provide a 4-hour overview** to members of the agency teams responsible for implementing the new system. The session will allow the agency teams to preview the new system.

Project manager Brian Turner will provide a project update; a discussion about project risks, challenges, and myths; and information about project timelines.

Functional team lead Gary Wilkinson will give an update on the business capabilities that will be added in Releases 2 and 3 that are scheduled for summer and fall of 2005. Training specialist Kristie Clark will discuss end user roles and how they will be used to determine system security and training needs.

In addition to these presentations, attendees will be able to select one-hour sessions on topics of specific interest, including system reporting, technical infrastructure, data conversion, business functions, interfaces, and end user readiness.

### **The 4-hour sessions are scheduled for April 28, 29 and 30.**

Attendees must register through their agency change agents to ensure that seats are available in the session they wish to attend. Each agency has a designated change agent who serves as a point of contact for the HRMS project, conduit for information and champion for both the project and the agency needs.

To find out more about the HRMS project, including the name of your agency's change agent, visit the project web site at <http://hrms.dop.wa.gov>, accessible from any state agency.

technology areas. These draft specs are available for review through May 17 on the [Department of Personnel website](#).

The final step in the first phase is to look at other classes that can be consolidated with little or no cost impact. The specifics have not been determined on which classes might be included.

### **Second and Third Phases**

An interagency task group is evaluating factors such as agency priorities, number of incumbents, ease of transition, and fiscal considerations. This task group will recommend steps for phased implementation to be spread over the 2005-2007 and 2007-2009 biennia.

### **Salary Ranges**

Salary ranges will remain the same during the first phase of the new implementation plan. A move to wider salary ranges will be implemented gradually in concert with the phased implementation of the new occupational categories.

For the latest information as it becomes available, visit the [Washington Works website](#) or sign up for the [HR2005 email distribution list](#). ★

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### **CODE REVISER PUBLISHES FINAL COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING RULES**

The state code reviser on April 7 published the final rules that will govern competitive contracting, to take effect July 2005. Along with publication of the rules, the Department of General Administration (GA) is issuing the “Concise Explanatory Statement,” a summary of how public comments were incorporated into the rule-adoption process, available online at: [www.ga.wa.gov/competitivecontracting](http://www.ga.wa.gov/competitivecontracting).

General Administration Director Rob Fukai said he is confident in the rules because of the manner in which they were written. “We employed a very open and transparent process in writing the rules,” Fukai said.

### **Training to support agencies**

Agencies will have the option to competitively contract services “traditionally and historically provided by state employees” beginning July 1, 2005 as part of several changes mandated in the Personnel System Reform Act of 2002.

Fukai said agencies should begin preparing now by evaluating the cost and efficiency of their current services to be ready for competitive contracting. An agency’s decision to competitively contract for a service – or not to – will likely receive considerable public scrutiny. “GA is available to help,” Fukai said.

General Administration is working with the Department of Personnel to develop training for state agencies and employees about various aspects of the rules scheduled to begin next fall. A competitive contracting manual also will be designed to help guide state agencies and employees through the process.

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## Review of comments in developing rules

General Administration reviewed 354 comments received during the public comment period about the proposed contracting rules. The comments varied from general concerns about the process to some precise analyses, Fukai said. The comments resulted in 14 clarifications to the proposed rules including:

- ★ Definition of a “displaced employee.” The adopted rule defines a displaced employee as a classified employee whose position or work would be eliminated, resulting in the employee being laid off or assigned to a different job classification as the result of a bid award during the competitive contracting process.
- ★ A specific time period between which a state agency rejects an alternative to soliciting bids from potentially displaced employees to when it can publish a solicitation. This ensures that potentially displaced employees have time to form an Employee Business Unit (EBU) if their alternative is rejected.
- ★ Clarifying a requirement that state agencies specify resources available to potentially displaced employees who consider forming one or more EBUs and development of a “resource plan” to prepare their bid.
- ★ Clarifications recommended by the state’s Executive Ethics Board. This ensures that an employee can be considered for employment by the entity awarded the contract if the EBU’s bid is unsuccessful.

### FEATURED QUESTION:

**Q:** If an agency decides to pursue competitive contracting, will WMS managers be affected the same as classified employees?

**A:** Yes. Members of the Washington Management Service (WMS) are still classified state employees, and are subject to the same competitive contracting provisions as other state employees. They may also be part of an Employee Business Unit, the same as supervisors and line employees.

“We started with a clean slate and then built an extensive stakeholder involvement process to arrive at the adopted rules,” said David Gomez, a management analyst at General Administration who was involved in writing the rules. “We are very satisfied that the team achieved its goals.”

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*Have feedback on this issue of IN THE WORKS? Email it to [washingtonworks@ofm.wa.gov](mailto:washingtonworks@ofm.wa.gov)*

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